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United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
FS-402

The USDA Forest Service

Caring for the Land and Serving People

Natural Resource Management

The Forest Service will cooperate with our many partners to improve management of the Nation's forests and rangelands and all of their resources.

We have a special responsibility to manage the National Forests and Grasslands as models for multiple-use sustained-yield management. We are committed to wise use and balanced consideration of all these natural resources. We will follow a conservation philosophy that will bestow to future generations the opportunities we now enjoy. These include high quality water, wood and paper for homes and hundreds of other uses, forage for wildlife and livestock, wilderness and outdoor recreation for enjoyment and relaxation, quality habitat for many plants and animals, and a source of important minerals.

Research will continue to expand the scientific basis for forestry and natural resources management. We will make significant progress in key areas, such as acid rain, insect and disease control, wood utilization, and ways to better manage forests for all of their values. We will share this knowledge and experience to improve both the Nation's and the world's forests.

Public Support and Trust

The years ahead will be challenging. Many people care for, and have often-conflicting needs and concerns about, how these lands should be managed. Every citizen of the United States is a "stockholder" in the lands we manage and the research we produce. Their views and thoughts are important in everything the Forest Service does.

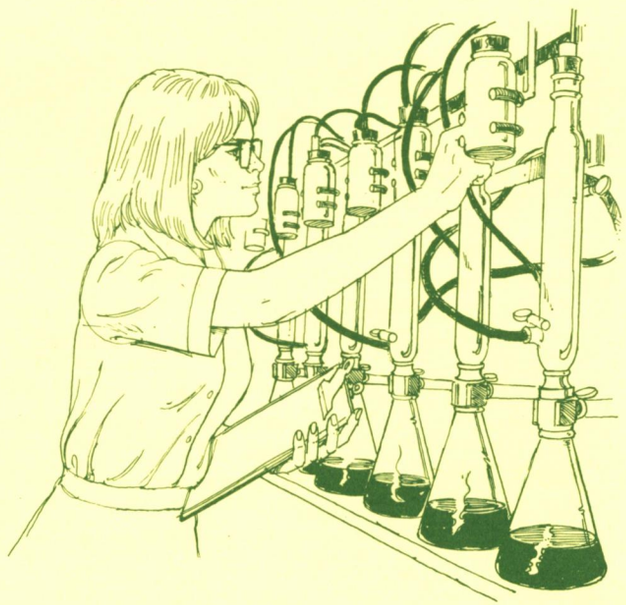
We will work hard for broad public understanding, trust, and confidence in what we do. We can earn this by giving quality public service, communicating openly with the public, and being attentive to public needs and values. We will be good neighbors and good hosts. We will support our partners and work with them in a spirit of cooperation to achieve balanced natural resources management.

Our Greatest Strength—Our People

Recognizing that our greatest strength is our people, we will be a more effective and productive organization. We will promote a management climate which fosters teamwork, esprit de corps, innovation, creativity, common sense, and the open expression of ideas. We will experiment with and test new ideas, fully recognizing that some will not work, but adopting those that do.

We will have a workforce that better reflects the national diversity. Every individual is important in achieving the overall mission of the Forest Service. We will keep our employees informed and promote a strong sense of purpose.

Finally, we will strive to make each person's work interesting, challenging, rewarding, and fun—more than just a job!



The USDA Forest Service—Caring for the Land and Serving People

To Forest Service People:

Forest Service people have always been known for their dedication to *caring for the land and serving people*—our basic mission. We see our work as much more than a job. It is our opportunity as individuals to help protect and manage forests and rangelands for this and future generations.

But we live in challenging times. Issues are complex. Demands are great. So, now it is especially important that each of us understands our basic mission, heritage, and values that have served the Forest Service so well. And, it is important that we share a vision of the future. This document was developed with the assistance of a broad cross section of Forest Service people to reflect our mission, values, and vision of the future.

I urge each of you to apply these values and ideals to help guide your everyday work. It will take hard work, dedication, and a strong sense of purpose from all of us. As each of us does this, I am convinced we can make our shared vision a living reality.

R. Max Peterson

September 1986 R. Max Peterson, Chief

October 1986

Our Mission

We are Forest Service people. We care for the Nation's forests and rangelands. We serve the needs of the people who own them. In short, we strengthen the Nation for future generations—and we are proud of our role.

The Forest Service is a leader in the conservation and wise use of the Nation's forests and rangelands. We manage the National Forests and Grasslands, cooperate with the States to help private landowners apply good forest practices on their lands, and do research to find better ways to manage and use our natural resources.

A Proud Heritage

Our Conservation Philosophy

On February 1, 1905, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Act transferring the Nation's Forest Reserves from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. That same day, Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson endorsed Gifford Pinchot's conservation philosophy of wise use and service to the American people. The Forest Reserves, later renamed the National Forests, were to be managed for the greatest good for the greatest number of people in the long run. Local questions were to be decided by local officials—a philosophy that has made the Forest Service one of the most decentralized and responsive agencies in the Federal Government. So the Forest Service has been committed from its very beginning to working closely with the people.

Values and Principles

Early forestry leaders like Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot combined vision and action. Their principles and philosophies helped mold the Forest Service culture and values that have stood the test of time—conservation leadership, public service, responsiveness, integrity, a strong land ethic, and professionalism characterized by people who know their jobs and do them well. These values and principles are the bedrock on which the Forest Service stands—they will support us as we adapt to, and thrive on, change and challenge.

"A public official is there to serve the public and not to run them."

—Gifford Pinchot

The Future—Strengthening the Nation

The Forest Service is committed to our tradition of strengthening the Nation and increasing its wealth—our economic, environmental, and spiritual wealth. Our forests are true national treasures. We appreciate the beauty and bounty of these lands. We will keep them healthy and productive. We will keep the air and streams clean and the fish and wildlife abundant.